

February 4, 2014

## **Commission on Public Art Proposed Mural for Parking Garage**

Over the last several months, since the last mural proposal was turned down by the Town Council in October of 2013, the Commission has discussed how to move forward with the mural project. The Commission now unanimously supports a new approach to the project that assembles the mural image from several thousand 6" by 6" inch plywood tiles that are individually painted by members of the public and then stacked in a metal frame to create the final image over the course of several days. The public can watch as each completed tile is slid into place from the top of the parking garage down multiple columns of tracks, slowly building the overall image.

This design process has been developed by Russ Bennett, an artist from Vermont, who has created several large mural projects for towns and cities across the U.S. (see the attached video).

The Commission has endorsed a mural theme that will utilize images of several well-known but demolished buildings from Leesburg's past, such as the opera house and hotel next to the courthouse, to be painted on the tiles, possibly with historic figures, and/or quotes that evoke Leesburg's past.

Mr. Bennett will work with the Commission to develop this idea into a final design that will be submitted to the Town Council for approval.

There are many advantages to this approach to the project:

- The project can be a temporary exhibit, to be displayed in the metal frame before being permanently mounted on a backing board.
- The backing board can be mounted on the parking garage wall for longer term or permanent display, but can be relocated in the future, if desired.
- The initial project will cover approximately 1/3 of the wall (either the center section or the west end by the log cabin), allowing for two more murals at a later date, or integrating the remaining portion of the wall into the new "pocket park" design.
- The estimated total cost of the project is \$55,000.00, including an initial design and management fee of \$15,000.00. A large portion of the total cost can be made up by donations for materials from local business and charging a \$10-\$20 donation fee for a member of the public to paint a tile. Roughly 4,000 tiles will be needed to complete the design (104 columns wide by 38 rows high)
- The project will actively engage the public and can become the center of a weekend festival or other town event.

Mr. Bennett will manage the project and will provide a project management team that will lead local volunteers. The management team and volunteers will run the "painting

stations" where the public will paint the tiles. The stations are broken up by color so that little or no artistic skill is required and no specific image will have to be painted on any one tile. Each tile is numbered and lettered on the back so that it can be slid into the proper place in the mural to create the desired overall image.

### **\$55,000.00 Cost Breakdown:**

Phase 1: Fee for design and management 15,000.00

Phase 2:

Temporary frame and set up of that frame to slide the tiles into

And making of border and tiles

Material 7,000.00

Labor 10,000.00

Mr. Bennett has an existing frame we can adapt in Tennessee that will likely save about 5,000 off of this number

Material and prep of material and paint and brushes and signage on site  
5,000.00

Labor (augmented by volunteers) to manage the painting and installing of the pieces in the frame over five day time period 15,000.00

Disassembly of the mural and application of tiles to plywood panels that can then be permanently installed 5,000.00

Trucking 3,000.00

Not included in these costs are the hotel, meal and travel costs for the management crew, which we will try to have picked up by a sponsor and by the hotel.

### **Link for mural video:**

<https://vimeo.com/76383314>